

Appn. No.: 09/689,017
Amdt. Dated October 29, 2003
Reply to Office Action dated August 1, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for improving capture of a symbology region in a postage indicium applied on a mailpiece, wherein the symbology region may be caused to exhibit a defect associated with the production and/or scanning of the postage indicium, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing one or more error compensation marks in the proximity of the symbology region such that the error compensation marks are caused to exhibit changes indicative of the defect of the symbology region, and

(b) detecting the changes in the error compensation marks in order to compensate for the defect of the symbology region to ensure that the symbology region is being interpreted correctly.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the symbology region includes an OCR character region.

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3. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein the error compensation marks include a plurality of timing marks for identifying the defect of the OCR character region caused by irregularities in transport of the mailpiece through the indicium printing device.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein the irregularities are the result of a mismatch between transport velocity for transporting the mailpiece and timing signals of the printing device.

5. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein the print device includes a print head having a plurality of inkjet nozzles, and wherein the irregularities are the result of a misalignment of the transport mechanism with the print head, causing the inkjet nozzles to appear skewed relative to a transport direction of the transport mechanism.

6. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein the irregularities are the result of an uneven surface section of the mailpiece.

7. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein the error compensation marks include at least one graphic image for identifying the defect of the OCR character region caused by irregularities in the postage indicium producing device.

8. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the postage indicium producing device is an inkjet printer having at least one row of inkjet nozzles to apply ink droplets onto the

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mailpiece, wherein the irregularities in the indicium producing device are related to missing ink droplets applied by the inkjet nozzles.

9. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the postage indicium producing device is an inkjet printer having a plurality of inkjet nozzles to apply ink droplets onto the mailpiece, wherein the irregularities in the indicium producing device are related to blockage of one or more inkjet nozzles.

10. (original) A system for improving capture of a symbology region in a postage indicium applied on a mailpiece, wherein the symbology region includes symbols which may be caused to exhibit a defect associated with the production and/or scanning of the postage indicium, said system comprising:

(a) a first mechanism, responsive to the mailpiece, for generating and providing one or more error compensation marks in the proximity of the symbology region, wherein the error compensation marks can be caused to exhibit changes indicative of the defect in the symbology region;

(b) a second mechanism for reading the error compensation marks and producing data indicative of the error compensation marks;

(c) a third mechanism, responsive to the data, for detecting the changes in the error compensation marks and for providing a signal indicative of the changes; and

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(d) a fourth mechanism, responsive to the signal, for compensating for the defect in the symbology, according to the detected changes in the error compensation marks.

11. (original) The system of claim 10, wherein the symbology region includes an OCR character region and the symbols include OCR characters.

12. (original) The system of claim 11, wherein the second mechanism includes an optical scanner and the data includes a scanned image.

13. (original) The system of claim 12, wherein the third mechanism includes an image processing algorithm to compare the scanned image with a fixed set of graphical information in order to detect changes in the error compensation marks.

14. (original) The system of claim 12, further comprising an OCR reader, operatively connected to the optical scanner, for recognizing the OCR characters.

15. (original) The system of claim 14, wherein the OCR reader is operatively connected to the third mechanism to compensate for the defect in the OCR characters, according to the detected changes in the error compensation marks.